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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Senate Approves Legislation to Increase Funding to Reimburse States for Criminal Illegal Immigrant Costs

November 25, 2003

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Senate today approved legislation sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), John McCain (R-AZ), Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) that would authorize increased federal funding to reimburse states and local governments for the costs of incarcerating illegal criminal aliens.

In previous years, SCAAP was funded between \$500 million and \$585 million. In FY 03, however, the Bush Administration did not request any funding for the program, and Congress only provided \$250 million dollars in the Omnibus Appropriations bill. And in the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for FY 04, only \$300 million has been provided. These cuts come at a time when state and county governments face more than \$13 billion in incarceration costs.

“This legislation is intended to send a signal to the Administration and to appropriators that we believe it is critical that SCAAP be funded at adequate levels,” Senator Feinstein said. **“Control of illegal immigration is clearly a Federal responsibility. When the Federal government fails to control the nation’s borders, state, and local taxpayers should not have to foot the bill. Congress must not turn its back on the communities that continue to shoulder the burden of a what is a federal responsibility.”**

Under this legislation, funding for SCAAP would be authorized at the following levels:

- \$750 million in FY ‘04
- \$850 million in FY ‘05
- \$950 million in FY ‘06 through FY ‘10

Funding authorization for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) was initially established as part of the 1994 Crime Act. Last year, Congress approved legislation, sponsored by Senators Feinstein, McCain, and Kyl, reauthorizing funding for the SCAAP program through Fiscal Year 2004 at \$750 million. All 50 States and the District of Columbia now receive reimbursements from SCAAP.

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